A shallow farce of a story that barely pretends to have an ending, has no exposition, doesn't describe any of the characters, setting, or world, and has a plot that literally does not make sense.

And to top it all off? It's blatant slavery apologism. This author is a white woman from texas, and she's literally selling US a story that expects US to worship slave owners straight out of the gate, while wishing death upon every slave in the story that's not "ONE of the good ones", which slaves in

this series can only prove by being willing to commit suicide to protect their "Precious, adorable, heartwarming, cinnamon roll" slave owners.

Even if we ignore the blatant slavery apologism that starts in this book and never ends, even eight years later, with thirteen stories in this series, this book *and the entire REST of the series* constantly dehumanizes physically disabled people (especially when they're enslaved black people, that the author will

then cheer on the whitewashing of while raking in the cash despite claiming to care about minorities and claiming to be anticapitalist and anticorporation!), and stereotyping nonbinary people through biological essentialist stereotypes that were exhausting a decade ago.

And none of this ever improves throughout the 8+ years that this series has been ongoing, or the 13 stories in it so far! It just keeps getting worse instead!

We are never supposed to care about slaves in this series unless they're "ONE of the good ones" WHO are literally willing to kill themselves for their masters, because they're literally happy slaves, the exact disgusting trope people claim to hate jk rowling over, but then turn around and praise it when Martha wells does it over a decade later, despite them being the same age, and Martha wells, as a fully grown adult, getting to witness that backlash in real time!

Martha wells' writing will try to trick you into believing that horrific levels of physical and psychological abuse and even *slavery* is normal and cute. She'll convince you that drenty, effortless, emotionless writing that describes nothing and expects the paying audience to do all the work of making up all the emotions and descriptions ourselves, is the best you can ever hope for, because they read too many of her stories in ONE sitting and forget that other books, written by authors

that are actually competant and actually care exist.

Everything you think is "Bad on purpose" in this book?

It's not bad on purpose. The writing isn't bad on purpose. It's not because "The narrator's just unreliable!!!!" this is how every single thing she writes looks, including other stories in this series that do not have murderbot as their narrator, and yet, display all of the exact same fundamental writing and basic fraking "Thinking bigotry is bad" problems

she's refused to grow out of in thirty three fraking years of being a fully gown adult "Professional" auhtor now.

Just on a technical level, even before getting to the literal nazi-level dehumanization and slavery apologism, this writing is just terrible.

There is no setting. There is no worldbuilding. Every character is interchangeable and meaningless, and all of her protagonists are the same damn character with a different name and pronouns, and

the exact same "I'm an asshole to literally everyone around me, but everyone worships me anyways, for some reason, also, I'm the smartest person in the room, aren't I so clever for pulling dren out of my ass and declaring it inarguable fact???" attitude.

There are nine protagonists in this 30k word short story (yes, short story. This would fit in a pulp magazine from the 1930s, and most of them are literally better written than this, and, less racist at the same time! Which shouldn't

be possible!) and the literal only reason there are that many is so that Martha wells could tokenize as many different ethnicities as possible, to pretend to be progressive —

Except that these myriad characters — doctor mensah, doctor ratthi, doctor overse, doctor arada, doctor gurathin, doctor bharadwaj, doctor volescu, and the single non-doctor pin-lee, and murderbot, the happy slave?

None of them except doctor mensah have any physical

description *at all*. And mensah's consists solely of, and I literally quote, "Dark brown skin and lighter brown hair, cut very short".

The REST of them are blank voids where physical descriptions should be. And as for personality? Meaningless. 6 of these 9 of these characters have literally no personality to speak of, and the remaining three's personalities consist of: ratthi's goofy comic relief, and gurathin is an asshole, and pin-lee is a lawyer, which is apparently a personality, now.

Oh, and don't worry. Even that bit of gurathin’ personality won't last. The next time he plays a role in the series? He and murderbot are bffs without ever having a single conversation to actually develop to that point. It's just that Martha wells is dren at writing and we can't even get the most basic stakes of "Characters disliking eachother".

These characters are literally the most blatant example of tokenization I've seen in a while. She literally made eight of them

for no other purpose than being able to tokenize as many cultures as possible, withut having to do any of the basic research and effort to *describe these characters* at all, let alone give them personalities and backstories and interiority. Besides mensah being the president of an entire planet that owns slaves, don't even know what any of their jobs are, besides pin-lee being a lawyer, which is the entirety of her personality!

And did I mention the slavery apologism? We're literally supposed to worship these slave owners, because Martha wells tells US they're "Nice" slave owners, so that means they're not slave owners at all.

And meanwhile, they went solar systems out of their way to rent out a slave, treated that slave like an object, tortured it, tortured it some more, used it as a living murder weapon, and then tortured it some more!

But if you go along with how Martha wells frames them torturing murderbot, it's either a non-issue that you, the person reading this review literally don’t remember, or it's secretly "Cute" and "Heartwarming" and you should go awwwwwww!

1. They literally, willfully, happily enslave murderbot.

2. They force murderbot to be a human shield for them for over a month, along with doing all of their manual labor and cleaning up after their trash.

3. When murderbot almost dies saving their lives, none of them provide it the most basic first aid despite multiple free hands being available, and then they force it, dying, to walk itself back to its own segregated medical chamber.

4. Then, like that's not bad enough, mensah comes to harass murderbot while it's actively dying from saving her friends lives. Is she here to thank it? No. Is she here to help in any way? No. She's here to harass it with pointless questions while it is bleeding out

in front of her, and she has perfect access to its vital signs and knows this. (the fact that is it actively bleeding to death in front of her is treated as a joke. We’re genuinely supposed to laugh that the slave is bleeding to death)

5. Then, when murderbot loses consciousness from the blood loss of saving its slave owners lives, it's unconcious for eight hours. When it wakes up, it slave owners, that Martha wells wants US to believe are precious and adorable and "Treat it like an equal"

immediately demand it get back to work and report to them across the entire facility, immediately. After it's woken up from almost dying to save their worthless slave owning lives!

Meanwhile, bharadwaj, WHO was also injured, gets to stay in the whites only — I mean, reverse racist "People of color also kept slaves, so why do only white people get in trouble for it??" and "Slavery is good! See!!! People of color can do it too!!!! It's equality!!!" caricatures only"

hospital room. And so does volescu, despite the fact that he wasn't hurt physically at all.

Nope. It's just the slave, murderbot, WHO almost died, that has to immediately get back to work, and rush all the way across the entire facility for.....Something that, to quote the actual anticapitalist exhausted memes, "Could have been an email".

And that's not all. Not only do these slave owners immediately force murderbot back to work the

second it regains conciousness from almost dying to save them....

They force it to clean up its own blood. From where it was bleeding to death.

It was unconcious for over eight hours. Mensah came into its room before it lost conciousness, and saw all its and bharadwaj's blood everywhere, which must include all the hallways leading from the door to the segregated medical chamber, and what did she do, as the leader of this slave-labor expedition, as a character the

white author wants US to think is a good person?

Did she and her friends team up to clean up the blood of not only their supposed friend, but also the slave that just saved her?

No. Mensah literally saw the blood all over that room from where murderbot was literally dying, and instead of going, "Oh no, I'll get everyone together and we can clean this up, it's the least we can do for the person we've enslaved WHO just almost died making sure our friends didn't die".

No. She walked into that room, saw the pools of blood everywhere, and literally decided "That's the slave's problem when it wakes up from its blood-loss induced coma" and fraking left.

And then none of the other slave owners that Martha wells tells US are ~adorable precious cinnamon rolls WHO treat murderbot so well and are too nice for their own good~ do anything about it, either!

None of them thank murderbot for saving bharadwaj and volescu!

None of them tell murderbot it can have, bare minimum, a break from being a literal slave until it can recover fully! And Martha wells doesn't even want US to notice, let alone care!

She just tells US "They're nice slave owners! So that means they're not slave owners at all!" and we're supposed to just ignore the horrific ways they literally torture murderbot in just this book alone, not even getting into the horrific levels of exploitation the

REST of the series has them inflict upon it!

They literally use murderbot in this book not only as a human shield for their worthless slave owning lives, but also as a living murder weapon against other slaves that they think have escaped!

They literally turn their slave into a murder weapon to punish other slaves for escaping!

They mind-rape murderbot while it's unconcious from almost killing

itself to protect them yet again, purposefully invading its mind and looking through its entire life's history with no fraking care that this is a person they are violating, and then immediately they start spilling its fraking secrets!

Later, despite the fact that they already mind-raped it while it was unconcious, all the slave owners team up to purposefully trigger murderbot's p.T.S.D. For no reason except fraking malice, while claiming they ~just have to~ as a "Loyalty test"!

Mensah herself, which Martha wells tells US is "Heartwarming" fraking forces murderbot into an even more emotionally vulnerable state beforehand, just to make sure that when they trigger its PTSD on purpose, the trauma will be more effective!!!

And then immediately fraking guilttrips it afterward so it doesn't get mad at her for first making it emotionally vulnerable, and then purposefully triggering its PTSD!

And Martha wells expect US to worships these characters and

think all of this is adorable and heartwarming, without noticing any of the horrific abuse I’m describing to you right now!

And the entire series just doubles down on all of this, forever!

It never gets better!

This series never stops worshipping slave owners, and never stop asking US to agree that "Slaves WHO are not willing to kill themselves for their masters are worse than rabid animals WHO need to be tortured to death to

make the world a safer place for the poor, sweet, innocent slave owners who've never done anything wrong in their lives"

This author is racist. Her stories are racist. She is literally training people to worship slave owners and spread slavery apologism on her behalf.

If you read this book thinking, "This bigotry is all here to get criticized, right?" wrong.

The bigotry isn't in there to get criticized.

The dehumanization of physically disabled people is not in here to be criticized.

The demonizaton of slaves and worship of slave owners is not in here to be criticized.

It's in here because this is just what Martha wells actually believes.

She literally wrote a story where rich slave owners including the president of an entire planet enslave someone, torture them multiple times in a multitude of

ways, including using it as a living murder weapon to punish other slaves, and Martha wells tells US this is adorable and heartwarming and cute, instead of a horrific nightmare.

It's practically guarenteed you'll be able to look at comments on this review, and you'll see her stans repeating her slavery apologism, exactly as I'm spelling it out.

The favorite refrain of this woman's fandom is, "They're nice

slave owners, so that means they're not slave owners at all!"

Do not waste your money on this series or anything else Martha wells writes. She doesn't care about you, she'll just tokenize you and people like you — until apple offers her money, and then it's time for her to cheer from the rooftops as her nonbinary protagonist, which she's been telling people for years — but purposefully never putting in the books for plausible deniability for just this event — is a black person,

well, not anymore! Now it's played by a cis white MAN with blonde hair and blue eyes! So now the TV show is literal reverse racism.

Don't let the tokenized, undescribed names in this story confuse you into thinking this is an author WHO genuinely cares about representing minorities. Nothing here is representation, it's all just tokenization, stereotyping, and caricaturization to uphold white supremacist slavery apologism.

Martha wells has been writing and defending antiblackness and slavery apologism since 2011, this series is just her most sucessful attempt at getting those ideas mainstream. And it's not a coincidance that this was published a year after trump was made president the first time.

Save your money and borrow this from a libarary or a friend or wait until the publisher gives it away for free for the dozenth time — they're so desperate to get people to review it, they give them away

constantly, because no ONE wants to pay the exorbitant prices for stories that literally aren't even complete, have no character or setting descriptions, have no worldbuilding, and the plots don't even pretend to make sense.

I do actually, genuinely recommend reading these, though, because it is a great way to learn how to spot and tear apart propaganda when it’s couched in ‘cutsey wholesome adorable” vibes, like Martha wells does with all her slavery apologism (and

classism, and eugenics and genocide apologism, and so much more!)

Treat these books as a crash course on how to spot and tear apart slavery apologism, and then do your part to educate others, or the next twenty years are going to see a flood of even more book series inspired by this, doubling down on the pro-slavery propaganda forever, just like Martha wells is.

If you think the series has to get better after this book, it doesn’t.

The “Heroes” of the story, that are not anti-heroes, that we’re supposed to unconditionally adore and think of as good people, are literally still torturing slaves to death 10 stories in. It will never improve, because if Martha wells ever cared about criticizing the institution of slavery, this book, as we are all reviewing it here, would never exist in the first place.

It is physically impossible to be someone that genuinely thinks slavery is horrific, and write this book, let alone every other book

that comes after it, where Martha wells keeps doubling down, *forever*.